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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [AEMR](#) [KFLO](#) [CASC](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: KHARTOUM AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE AFTER ACTION REOPRT AND  
LESSONS LEARNED

REF: (A) STATE 22076, (B) STATE 34500

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: When Authorized Departure was announced on March 10, 2009, the post had previously prepared for personnel and logistical issues associated with a large-scale evacuation of Mission personnel. However, the Embassy had less than one day's notice that the Department had decided to put Khartoum on Authorized Departure (AD) status. As a result, the post had virtually no time to plan for AD beyond its contingency preparations. After AD was announced, COM authority over internal decisions such as in-country travel between Khartoum and Juba, had to be clarified. Once a system for reporting all travel to and from post was in place, it worked well. However, USG personnel in Sudan include a number of TDY staff and others who are not captured in the Department's generic personnel tracking applications. Post had to rely on ad-hoc internal tracking and counting mechanisms that were time-consuming. Support from M/FLO, RM, AF/EX, PMO, DS and others was outstanding. Our only suggestion is that more detailed instructions be provided to posts going on AD in areas such as time and attendance reporting and HR issues. END SUMMARY.

BEFORE AD WAS CALLED...

2. (SBU) Post has twice come close to going on AD over the past two years and received crisis management training in December 2008. In anticipation of the expected early 2009 ICC warrant announcement and other ongoing security and safety issues, Mission personnel in Khartoum began holding logistical planning meetings in January 2009. In addition, prior to AD, the Community Liaison Office conducted a briefing on AD and Ordered Departure (OD) regulations for Eligible Family Members and MOHs at post. The CLO briefing was well-attended, and several packets of information and reference material were provided. The logistical planning group focused on the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), consular issues, the logistics involved in evacuations and identified USG personnel located throughout Sudan under Chief of Mission authority.

HOW AD WAS CALLED...

3. (SBU) When Ref A was received at post, meetings were called quickly to react to the announcement. The COM had been in contact with the Department regarding the security situation in Khartoum after the ICC announcement and also had discussed AD with AF prior to the Department's announcement on March 9. The COM held a town-hall on March 10 with all American employees and EFMs to discuss AD. He addressed concerns that many staff members had on their reluctance to go on AD and the possible impact this might have on their career. Identifying candidates for evacuation was sometimes divisive. In an already stressful environment morale suffered as a result of uncertainties over whether all EFMs would be ordered to depart (this did not happen,) and if the post would soon be required to go on OD status. Travel within Sudan became an issue immediately due to the frequent official TDY back and forth between Khartoum and Juba (which was not on AD) required to sustain program

and logistical management. An internal procedure was quickly instituted and cleared with the Bureau to allow the COM to use his authority to approve in-country travel.

AFTER AD WAS CALLED...

14. (SBU) TRACKING PERSONNEL. The Regional Security Office had previously created an effective tracking system to capture the large number of post personnel, TDY staff and others at the Mission. This RSO "Head Count" was used to follow the movements and whereabouts of personnel at post. TDY staff and USAID personnel in Sudan cannot be tracked in the State Department WebPASS Post Personnel or EMS applications. The approval process for allowing employees to travel to post under AD was extremely time-consuming. During the 30-day AD, approximately 35 requests for travel to post were approved by M. Post received great support from AF/EX, which expedited all the necessary clearances and approvals. Khartoum employees are allowed three rest and recuperation trips for a two-year assignment. For those employees who planned to travel with EFMs, leaving on R&R became a very difficult choice as in most cases EFMs would not be allowed to return. Some employees were near the limit of being able to take the last R&R and were afraid they would lose the chance to do if they hesitated.

15. (SBU) REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION - FROM US AND FROM YOU. The Embassy often responded to multiple requests from the Department for identical information. An overview of evacuation contacts in the Department would be helpful. Even better might be a central, shared location where post could upload and update information on evacuees. For example, post provided detailed information on all evacuees, including "wheels up" cables to RM in Charleston. A few weeks into the evacuation, our time and attendance expert in Charleston

informed us that she was unaware we were on AD and did not have access to any information or cables previously provided. Correcting evacuee information to Charleston has been time-consuming and has inconvenienced employees. On the flip side, when asking for information from Department contacts, post often found our requests were sometimes routed to several offices before someone provided an answer. A stronger HR component in the evacuation process would be helpful. There is a need to authoritatively answer questions from employees and family members who wish to know how a decision to leave post will affect their career or Tour of Duty.

AFTER AD ENDED...

16. (SBU) RETURNING TO POST. USAID and State Department employees are still in the process of returning to post. Two Khartoum employees (an EFM working at post and a USDH State Department employee) remain at FSI on TDY orders to finish FSI courses started during AD. Employees who had elected to ship UAB during evacuation found themselves waiting for it to arrive in Washington or at their Official Foreign Safe Haven. The authorization of an additional seven days for transportation issues has been very helpful and most appreciated for these employees.

17. (U) As stated above, post received impressive and consistently excellent support from the Department. We are deeply grateful for all of your assistance.

FERNANDEZ